

That particular poison pill that has foiled bipartisan agreement for more than 8 months is the nub of the problem. If we could just get past that, if the Republican leader would only back off maximalist demands on corporate immunity, we could get something done. I mean it. We could actually get something done.

Now, I know the Republican leader will say: Wait a minute, Democrats have partisan demands of their own, like providing assistance to save State and local services. But to equate State and local aid—money for policemen and firefighters, busdrivers, sanitation workers—to complete corporate immunity is a false equivalence. We know the two policies are not equivalent.

First of all, there is broad bipartisan support for State and local aid. It is not a Democratic demand. Many Republicans support it too. There are bipartisan bills on the floor of the Senate demanding \$500 billion in aid for the States. There are Governors—Democrats and Republicans—sending letters to all of us saying we need money; we need help. But the leader's corporate immunity provision doesn't have the support of a Democrat. Not a single person voted for it. It is expressly partisan. There is not equivalence.

I know the media likes to say, on the one hand, on the other. There is not equivalence here. One is helping people who desperately need help. The other is a partisan demand that has been around for a long time that simply does not get bipartisan support.

State and local aid is a solution to a real and urgent problem. Corporate immunity from lawsuits is not. They are not equivalent. State and local budgets are deeply in the red. Since the beginning of the pandemic, State and municipalities have laid off 1.3 million public employees—firefighters, police, first responders, teachers. We are talking about jobs—jobs—in red States as well as blue States.

The leader likes to cite one statistic about tax revenue in one blue State to argue that no State—no State deserves Federal aid, not Wyoming or Alaska, North Dakota, that have each seen sharp declines in tax revenue; not Florida or Nevada or Louisiana, that depend on tourism and face revenue declines of 10 percent or more.

State and local aid is a real and urgent problem. It is not abstract. It is people, and it is workers. PPP that helps small businesses—one of its main rationales, an important one, something I agree with—prevents workers who work for small businesses from being laid off. What is the difference between a worker being laid off by a small business because they don't have funding or a worker being laid off from a State and local government because they don't have funding? There is no difference. There is no difference.

The leader's corporate immunity provision, on the other hand, is a solution, ideological, in search of a problem. Almost a year into this pandemic—15

million Americans infected, 290,000 lives lost to COVID-19—there have been only 23 personal injury suits from exposure to the coronavirus—23 in the entire country, over the entire year. And that is why Senate Republicans can't reach a bipartisan agreement to help the unemployed, feed the hungry, fund a vaccine, or support our schools?

Corporations that want protection from a few dozen lawsuits is equivalent to millions of workers from State and local governments being laid off? Give me a break. Again, there are a few States that don't need the help, but many more States do—many more.

This is mind-boggling. The Republican leadership is blocking a solution for the entire country until they get a favor for corporations who don't even need it. The American people, all of us, are sick of this ridiculous gamesmanship by the majority leader.

We need to come together. We need to get something done. The American people deserve an outcome. It is not going to happen if the Republican majority insists on getting 100 percent of its partisan demands.

I yield the floor.

I, once again, thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, I did want to get some final comments. I mentioned a minute ago and, of course, it is the right of the leaders—Democratic and Republican leaders—to have the first time. It is fine with me, but I just want to make one comment about it.

The minority leader was talking about what is going on right now and who would be favored and all that. I think one of the things we don't talk about, we should talk about. You know, I know the media doesn't like our President, and a lot of things he has done he didn't get credit for it.

One of the major things—and this is all going to come out—unfortunately, this didn't come out before the election, but it should have because there is—what do they call that? Warp speed? Is that right? Yes, this Operation Warp Speed. This was back in June. The President came out with this. General Perna was put in charge of it.

I wasn't prepared to talk about this, but I think it is important right now that we do because I want to follow up with what the minority leader talked about because everyone is concerned about it. They are all concerned about the coronavirus and those things. This has never happened in this country before. But it has happened. It had nothing to do with this administration. They did a great job. And to demonstrate what a great job they did, they had the Operation Warp Speed—this was back in June of this year—and they put General Perna in charge of it.

I chair the Senate Armed Services Committee. They wanted us to have a

hearing on this. I was so excited. No one could have sat through that hearing last June without coming to the conclusion that this thing is going to be behind us. We are winning this thing. And you come to the conclusion that we are going to have the virus under control. We are going to have this system. We all know that is happening today, right now, as we are speaking. We have several companies—five companies—who have come so close, and they are now distributing the necessary equipment so that people become immune to this thing. That is happening right now.

It happens that even though this was last June—it was last June that we had the hearing in my committee. Everything that they predicted, that General Perna predicted at that time, is happening. They said by December we would have it. Well, here it is, December, and we have got it. And then we said it is going to take about 3 months to be able to make the distribution around the country. And that time is coming up. It is getting close to that time, and that is going to happen. I mean, we are looking right now at April as the time that we have got this thing defeated. And right now, this administration—I want to give them credit for this. They have got this distribution system set up so it is going to be going around the country, and this thing is going to come to an end.

I have to tell you that the President is responsible for putting this in place, and it is, right now, on schedule.

I don't want to take a lot of time. I see that Senator REED has come in. Senator JACK REED is the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Let me just tell you, I can't think of anyone I would rather have as a partner in putting together the Defense authorization bill—the most important bill of all year—than Senator JACK REED. He has been there by my side, with me, working together.

We had a Big 4 meeting. We always end up with a Big 4 meeting. To tell you what that is, that is the ranking Democrat and Republican in the House, the Democrat and Republican in the Senate; and the four of us get together and decide what are we going to do, what is this going to look like. And then we pass it. We passed this bill. It is a good bill. It is one that we have the opportunity to vote on today, the most important bill of the year. And if voting against it, you have to stop and think about those kids who are out there in harm's way and the threats that they are facing on a regular basis. This is a problem. This is a serious thing that is out there. I can't imagine wanting to have to face these people in the field, in harm's way, and say: Well, we didn't pass the Defense authorization bill.

We are going to pass it. These kids are going to get the right treatment that they need. They are going to get the resources they need. I did mention just a few minutes ago about the previous administration. I don't want people to misunderstand what I am saying.

I am not saying this critically of the Obama administration. I am saying he didn't have the same priorities that many of us have. His top priority was not defending America, in spite of what the Constitution tells us what should be the top priority. And so we went through that time with—as I mentioned, between the years of 2010 and 2015, 5 years, reduced the funding for the military by 25 percent. At the same time, China was increasing their funding for their military by 83 percent. This is what we looked at, and that is what our President was faced with. And that is why—I don't know who is ill-advising the President to be concerned about an issue that has nothing to do with the military. And I know that the President has been the strongest—I don't know if there has ever been a President who has been a stronger supporter of our military and our kids in harm's way than President Trump. I am just looking at this now, and I am thinking, we are now 1 minute away from passing a bill that is the most significant bill.

At this time, I ask if the minority would like to make any comments at all because I will tell you right now, I mentioned the names of all the people who worked on this bill for the last year, and side by side have been Senator JACK REED and I in the leadership of this bill.

It is going to be a reality.

I want to thank you and give you an opportunity to get a last word in here because we are going to vote on this in less than a minute.

Mr. REED. The last word will be very brief if I am recognized, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REED. Let me commend the chairman. I don't think we would be here without Chairman INHOFE's leadership. I have never seen anyone work so diligently and so constructively.

We want to thank the staff. They do a remarkable amount of work.

Also, we have to recognize our colleagues in the House—Chairman ADAM SMITH, who did a good job, and Ranking Member MAC THORBERRY, whose name is on this bill.

I urge passage, and I commend the chairman.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you, Senator REED.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—CONFERENCE REPORT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, an Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defensive activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, an Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Cory Gardner, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395, an Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2021 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 263 Leg.]

#### YEAS—84

Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Baldwin	Gardner	Reed
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Risch
Bennet	Grassley	Roberts
Blackburn	Harris	Romney
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rosen
Blunt	Heinrich	Rubio
Boozman	Hirono	Sasse
Brown	Hoeven	Schatz
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cantwell	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Jones	Shaheen
Carper	Kaine	Shelby
Casey	Kelly	Sinema
Cassidy	King	Smith
Collins	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	Menendez	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Udall
Duckworth	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Enzi	Murray	Whitehouse
Ernst	Perdue	Wicker
Feinstein	Peters	Young

#### NAYS—13

Booker	Kennedy	Sanders
Braun	Lee	Warren
Cotton	Markey	Wyden
Cruz	Merkley	
Hawley	Paul	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Loeffler	Rounds
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 13.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the postcloture time on the conference report to accompany H.R. 6395 expire at 12:30 today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### 2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, colleagues, we are in the middle of a whole bunch of really important debates right now about the National Defense Authorization Act, trying to avoid a shutdown by the end of the day, and, of course, trying to find a path forward to authorize funding to continue to combat this pandemic.

But it is worth noting today that an effort to overturn the 2020 election continues and, in many ways, is picking up steam, and we need to talk about the consequences for the Nation.